AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) An isolated oligoribonucleotide consisting of two separate complementary RNA single strands forming a double-stranded structure (dsRNA),

wherein said separate RNA strands are chemically linked,

wherein said dsRNA is non-autocomplementary,

wherein the dsRNA is 21 base pairs in length,

wherein the dsRNA does not comprise a full length RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene,

wherein one strand of the dsRNA is complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of said mammalian target gene, and

wherein the dsRNA specifically inhibits the expression of said mammalian target gene using dsRNA-mediated interference.

17. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage is formed by a covalent bond or hydrogen bond.

18. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said one strand of said dsRNA is fully complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene.

19. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage is a covalent linkage.

20. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 19, wherein said covalent linkage comprises a C18 linker group.

21. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage is a labile linkage.

22. (Currently amended) The dsRNA of claim ~~22~~ 21, wherein said labile linkage comprises a disulfide bridge.

23. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage comprises a covalent linkage that is labile.

24. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein the RNA transcript is a primary or a processed RNA.

25. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said one strand of said dsRNA is fully complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene.

26. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16 or 25, wherein said two separate complementary strands are fully complementary to each other.

27. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein one of the single strands is complementary to the other of the single strands, wherein the two separate single strands hybridize to each other to form the double-stranded structure, and wherein the one of the single strands is also chemically linked to the other of the single strands.

28-29. (Cancelled)

30. (New) The method of claim 16, the dsRNA specifically inhibits the expression at a concentration that is lower by one order of magnitude than a concentration required for a corresponding single-stranded oligoribonucleotide to inhibit expression.